

Research Partners

**Washington Transportation Center (TRAC)**  
In 1983, WSDOT, the University of Washington and the Washington State University formed a partnership that established the Washington Transportation Center (TRAC). TRAC provides a link among the government, university researchers, and the private sector. TRAC acts as a liaison, connecting those who need applied research at WSDOT with those best suited to conduct it at the universities. The WSDOT Research Director is the Executive Director of TRAC. Each university has a TRAC Director that works with the Executive Director.

**Transportation Northwest (TransNow)**  
TransNow is one of ten regional research centers of the National Transportation Centers Program. TransNow is a partnership between the University of Washington and Washington State University. In addition, TransNow helps showcase transportation research and education in the Pacific Northwest (Federal Region 10) which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska. The program is led by the University of Washington. TransNow is interested in research and educational programs that fall under the theme of “Operations Management and Planning.” Sub-areas include traffic operations, transit operations, and intermodal or other-modal operations.

**Transportation Research Board**  
The Transportation Research Board (TRB) is a division of the National Research Council, which serves as an independent adviser to the federal government and others on scientific and technical questions of national importance. The mission of the Transportation Research Board is to promote innovation and progress in transportation through research. The WSDOT Director of the Office of Research & Library Services serves as the TRB State Representative and acts as a liaison to represent the interests of WSDOT.

**AASHTO Standing Committee on Research and Research Advisory Committee**  
The AASHTO Standing Committee on Research (SCOR) provides oversight to the transportation research community and develops research priorities for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP). The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) includes research managers from each state department of transportation and provides input on research needs and priorities. In addition, RAC facilitates surveys that support research and provides a link between Research Directors. The WSDOT Director of the Office of Research & Library Services serves on the RAC and is the Chair of RAC 4 representing eighteen western states.



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# WSDOT Research Management

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WSDOT Research Management

The WSDOT Research Program includes research funded through the Federal State Planning and Research program, research funded by offices and projects across the agency, and participation in national research activities. Our goal is a research program that is strategic and representative of a one DOT approach. The strategic research program requires communication and coordination with the internal and external research partners. This document describes the committees and offices involved with the WSDOT Research Program.

WSDOT Research Office

The WSDOT Office of Research and Library Services includes the Research Office and the WSDOT Library. The Office consists of:

- Director, Office of Research and Library Services
- Five Research Managers
- Office Coordinator
- Fiscal Assistant
- WSDOT Librarian
- Reference Librarian
- Collection & Circulation Management Specialist

The Research Office organizes, manages, and disseminates the results of research conducted within the Department. The WSDOT Research Office coordinates the process for identifying, selecting, and managing research projects funded through the federal State Planning and Research Program (SPR). In addition, we facilitate development and management of research funded by other agency programs and legislative direction.

Each project is also assigned a Principal Investigator, Technical Monitor, and Research Project Manager.

The WSDOT Library supports staff, consultants and contractors by finding information on a topic, developing search strategies, locating facts and statistics, identifying information additional sources and obtaining articles and books through inter-library borrowing.

The WSDOT Research Office is guided by input from the Research Executive Committee and the Research Advisory Committees.

Other WSDOT Offices

Some Programs, Divisions, and Project Offices conduct research and experimental activities in addition to research funded by SPR. Some of these projects are administered through the Research Office, others are not. In addition, many development activities are conducted throughout the agency. The Research Office is working toward serving as a clearinghouse for all research activities.

The Research Executive Committee (REC)

The REC provides a consultative oversight to the WSDOT Research Office and the WSDOT Research Programs. The REC sets the strategic direction for the solicitation of project proposals.

The role of the Research Executive Committee is to:

- Define research goals that are the basis for project selection
- Establish the Research Advisory Committees
- Approve the funded research program
- Review key research findings
- Evaluate and finalize recommendations for implementation of research findings

REC members are:

- John Conrad, Assistant Secretary, Engineering and Regional Operations Division
- Brian Smith, Director, Strategic Planning and Programming
- Don Nelson, Director, Environmental and Engineering Programs
- Ted Trepanier and Chris Christopher, Co-Acting Directors, Maintenance and Operations Programs
- John Sibold, Director, Aviation Division
- Don Senn, Regional Administrator, North Central Region
- Don Wagner, Regional Administrator, Southwest Region

Research Advisory Committees (RAC)

Four Research Advisory Committees have recently been established. The Research Advisory Committees are intended to promote understanding of agency research needs, clarification of priorities, and promotion of multi-modal results, where applicable. The RACs met for the first time in April 2004. The four committees and committee Chairs are:

- Project Delivery, Don Nelson, Director, Environmental and Engineering Programs
- Operations, Ted Trepanier and Chris Christopher, Co-Acting Directors, Maintenance and Operations Programs
- Multimodal Transportation, John Sibold, Director, Aviation Division
- Information and Finance, Brian Smith, Director, Strategic Planning and Programming

Each committee is comprised of nine to twelve members. The RACs are chaired by members of the Research Executive Committee and staffed by WSDOT Offices, Region representatives, and the Research Office. The role of the RACs is to:

- Provide input into the creation of research problem statements

- Prioritize research needs in a manner that addresses critical agency issues and aligns with the strategic direction of the agency
- Recommend to the Research Executive Committee research projects to be funded
- Recommend technical monitors for the selected projects
- Receive reports and presentations on research results, discuss the recommendations of technical monitors for implementation, and make recommendations on funding for implementation
- Provide input to the Research Manager on the research needs and priorities within their functional areas.
- Provide input for national research participation (i.e., NCHRP and TCRP problem statement submittal and ranking)
- Provide input and feedback to the WSDOT Research Office on research programs and procedures.

Research Project Management

Each research project receiving funding from the WSDOT Research Office is assigned a Principal Investigator, Technical Monitor and Research Manager.

Role of the Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator is a university professor, a consultant, or agency employee with expertise in the subject area to be studied. The Principal Investigator manages the day-to-day activity of the research project.

Role of the Technical Monitor

Technical Monitors are WSDOT staff with technical knowledge of the research subject. The Technical Monitor ensures that the research project addresses WSDOT business needs.

Role of the Research Manager

The Research Manager is a staff person in the Research Office and is responsible for managing the research project process and ensuring that project milestones are reached in a timely fashion.

WSDOT Research

The WSDOT Research Program is in a state of evolution. Currently the program includes research funded through the Federal State Planning and Research (SPR) program and by offices and projects across the agency. WSDOT also participates in national research activities.

Our goal is to further develop the research program to be more strategic and representative of a one DOT approach – to ensure that our research dollars also support agency priorities and direction – and to serve as a clearinghouse for all of WSDOT’s research activities.

To make this shift requires that we improve coordination and communication among all of the players developing or conducting research for WSDOT. This document provides an overview of the selection process and identifies the parties involved in agency research activities.

Project Selection

WSDOT Research Projects

The research project selection process has been updated. The agency may identify research needs and problem statements through seminars sponsored by the Research Advisory. The seminars can include participation by agency employees and university professors. The research problem statements will be prioritized by the Research Advisory Committees. The Research Executive Committee will approve a final list of problem statements to be funded. Once priority problems are identified, the Research Office and technical staff will work with principal investigators to develop the research scope of work.

Even Year	
April	Research Advisory Committees (RAC) meet to review current program and consider possible budget recommendations for ensuing biennium
May	Research needs solicitation initiated from Research Advisory Committee members for each functional area represented on the committee
June to September	RAC functional areas may hold research sessions with interested parties to identify research needs
October 1	Functional area problem statements are submitted to ORLS
October/ November	RAC meetings held to prioritize problem statements and develop recommendations for the REC
December	REC reviews recommendations and develops final project list

Odd Year	
January	Research institutions identified and Principal Investigators selected
February to June	Project scopes developed
April	New research program and results from previous projects reviewed by RACs
July to September	Establish project contracts for new projects